

THE
DEFENDERS

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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THE DEFENDERS™

USE THE
MIND-MACHINE
QUICKLY, NAGAN!
WE WILL NEVER
DEFEAT THOSE
HEROES ONCE
THEY AWAKEN!

YOU'RE WRONG,
MY FRIEND! AFTER
OUR LITTLE
TREATMENT--

-- THE
DEFENDERS
WILL NEVER
BE THE
SAME!!

HAVOC
IS THE
HEADMEN!

Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS!

STEVE GERBER
STORY

SAL BUSCEMA
LAYOUTS

JIM MOONEY
FINISHED ART

ANNETTE K., LETTERER
PHIL R., COLORIST

MARV WOLFGAN
EDITOR

WEBBED HANDS, WARM HEART!

LUSCIOUS BROWN EYES
GAZE INTO THE ORB
OF AGAMOTTO-- AND
FLASH WITH FURIOUS...
ANGER.

LIPS ROLL BACK,
BARING GRITTED,
GRATING TEETH.
THE FAWN SNARLS.

THE DEFENDERS--
VALKYRIE, THE HULK,
AND DR. STRANGE--
HAVE FALLEN VICTIM
TO THE MACABRE
SCHEMES OF THE
HEADMEN.

BUT ALL
IS NOT WHAT
IT SEEMS--
AND THE BABY
DEER KNOWS
IT!

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IN DISGUST, THE ANIMAL TURNS AWAY FROM THE MYSTIC CRYSTAL, DESPERATION CLUTCHING AT ITS TINY HEART.



THE PLOT WAS CONCEIVED SO PERFECTLY, AND YET... HIS ALLIES HAVE BEEN DUPED.

LIVID, FURROWED BROW PULSING WITH THE ACHE OF SAVAGE LOATHING, THE DEER RECALLS THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WHICH LED HIM TO THIS STATE:

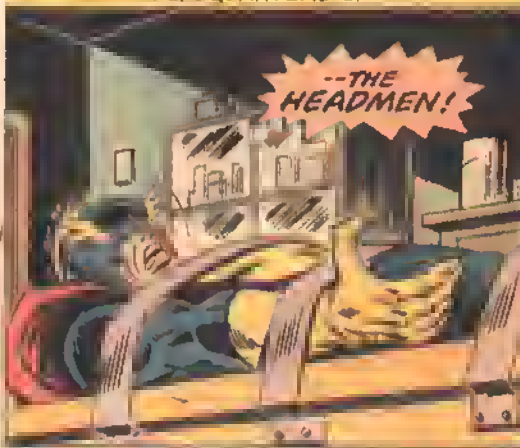


THE CAPTURE OF NIGHTHAWK--



-- AFTER THE DEER HIMSELF PROVIDED THE DREAM-ILLUSION THAT SENT THE WING-CAPED DEFENDER PLUMMETING FROM THE SKY.

NIGHTHAWK'S AWAKENING--ON THE OPERATING TABLE IN THE WESTBURY, CONNECTICUT, HEADQUARTERS OF--



--THE HEADMEN!

DR. JERRY MORGAN--THE MOLECULAR BIOLOGIST WHOSE LANGUIDNESS OF FLESH MATCHED THAT OF HIS PERSONALITY.

DR. ARTHUR NAGAN--THE TRANSPLANT SPECIALIST WHOSE HUMAN HEAD SAT ATOP THE BODY OF A GREAT APE...WHERE IT BELONGED.

AND PERHAPS THE MIGHTIEST OF THEM ALL (THE FAWN RECALLS WITH PRIDE), CHONDU THE MYSTIC, WHOSE HEAD WAS GIFTED WITH THE PSYCHIC POWER TO PROBE BEYOND THIS MORTAL SPHERE...



...WHOSE BRAIN NAGAN'S SCALPEL DEFTLY REMOVED FROM ITS NATIVE SKULL AND REPLACED BENEATH NIGHTHAWK'S CONE...

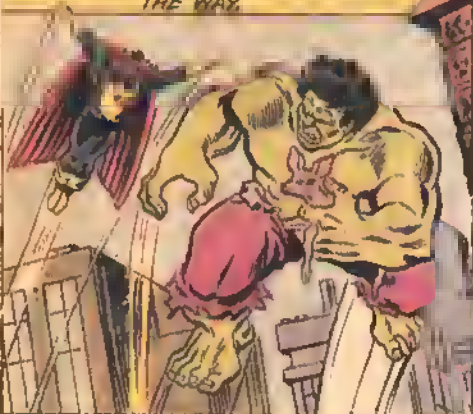
IT'S DONE, CHONDU. THE BRAIN WHICH ONCE COMMANDED THIS YOUNG, VITAL BODY--



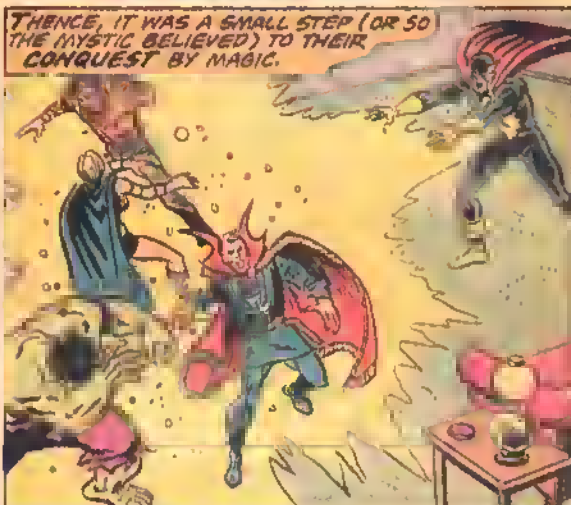
--NOW RESIDES IN A DISH OF LIFE-PRESERVING CHEMICALS, AS OF THIS MOMENT--

YOU ARE NIGHTHAWK!

THE TRANSPLANTED HEADMAN TOOK TO THE SKIES TO LOCATE NIGHTHAWK'S MORE POWERFUL COMRADES...TO WHOM THE INGENUOUS HULK HELPFULLY LED THE WAY.



THENCE, IT WAS A SMALL STEP (OR SO THE MYSTIC BELIEVED) TO THEIR CONQUEST BY MAGIC.



CHONDU, HOWEVER, HAD RECKONED WITHOUT THE SUPERIOR OCCULT CAPABILITIES OF DR. STRANGE...



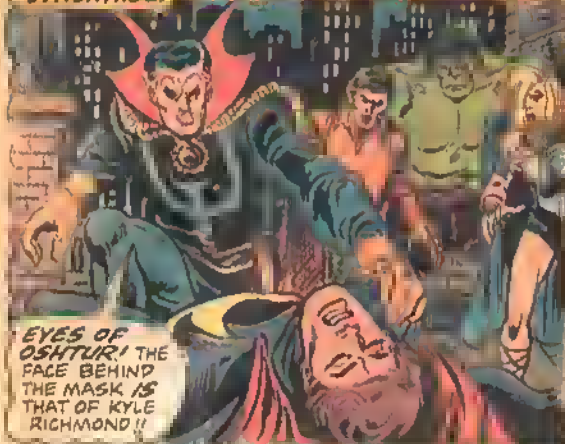
...AND SO WAS STUNNED SENSELESS WHEN THE SORCERER SUPREME RETALIATED.

WITH EACH DELIBERATE YET TENUOUS STEP DOWN THE STAIRCASE OF THE MYSTIC MASTER'S SANCTUM SANCTORUM...



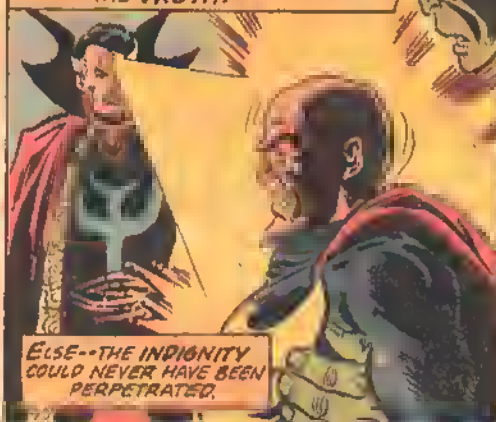
...THE FURY INCREASES, HE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ON WHAT NEXT OCCURRED.

BUT SURELY THE DEFENDERS MUST HAVE UNMASKED NIGHTHAWK, ASSUMING HIM TO BE AN IMPOSTER. SURELY THEY WOULD'VE BEEN STARTLED TO LEARN OTHERWISE.



EYES OF OSHTUR! THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK IS THAT OF KYLE RICHMOND!!

BUT, AS KYLE HAD NEVER EVINCED ANY APTITUDE FOR MAGIC, SURELY THEY WOULD'VE LOOKED FURTHER-- AND, BY ESOTERIC MEANS, UNCOVERED THE TRUTH.



ELSE--THE INDIGNITY COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN PERPETRATED.

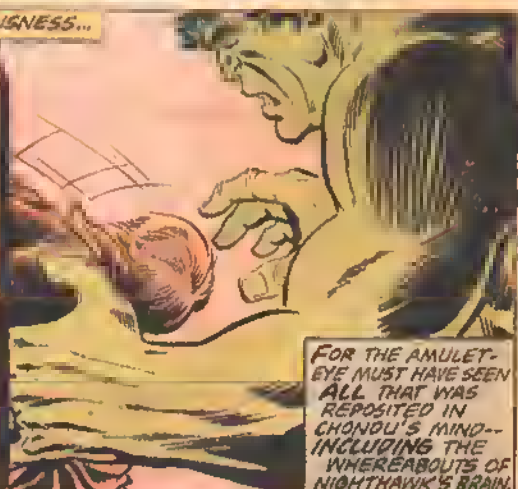


THE SORCEROUS SWITCHING OF SOULS--THE MIND OF VALKYRIE'S HUSBAND INTO CHONDU'S BRAIN IN NIGHT HAWK'S BODY--CHONDU'S MIND INTO THE BODY OF THE FAWN...

...LEAVING JACK NORRIS' BODY WITHOUT A CONSCIOUSNESS...



TRAPPING CHONDU IN A VOICELESS, HANDLESS FORM, UNABLE TO UTTER SPELLS, UNABLE TO GESTICULATE ENCHANTMENTS.



FOR THE AMULET-EYE MUST HAVE SEEN ALL THAT WAS REPOSITED IN CHONDU'S MIND--INCLUDING THE WHEREABOUTS OF NIGHTHAWK'S BRAIN.

THEY DEPARTED THEN-- JUST AS CHONDU'S MIND RETURNED TO A WAKING STATE--



--AND BECAME AWARE OF ITS BIZARRE PREDICAMENT.

BUT THEY LEFT LACKING ONE BIT OF INFORMATION-- ONE THAT CHONDU HIMSELF DID NOT POSSESS.



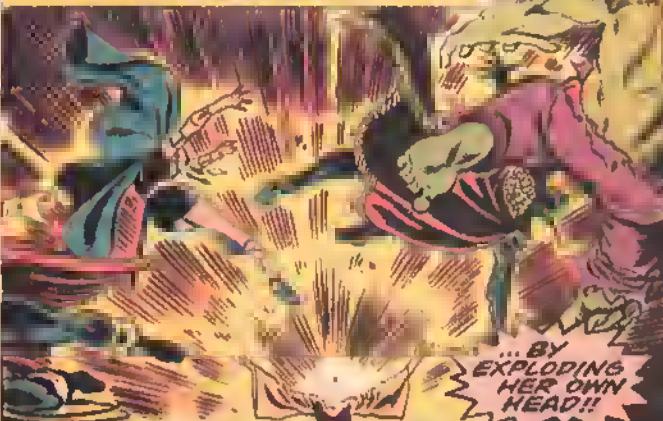
OH, THEY KNEW WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT THE HEADMEN'S REFUGE THAT THE VILLAINS SOUGHT TO GAIN CONTROL OF THEIR POWERS.



WHAT THEY DIDN'T KNOW...

...WAS HOW.

NOR COULD EVEN DR. STRANGE INTUIT THAT THE ANGELIC FIGURE WHO GREETED THEM WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY BLAST THEM INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS...



...BY EXPLODING HER OWN HEAD!!

IN THE CRYSTAL, CHONDU BEHELD THAT SCENE WITH GLEE... WATCHED AS THE HEAD RE-FORMED AND THE ILLUSORY GARB DISAPPEARED...



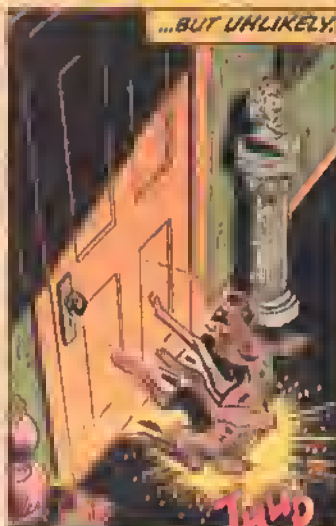
...TO REVEAL RUBY, A FOURTH HEADPERSON, THE WOMAN NAGAN HAD MYSTERIOUSLY HINTED WOULD SOON JOIN THEIR CONCLAVE, BUT WHOM CHONDU HAD NOT GLIMPSED UNTIL NOW. THE MYSTIC WAS ELATED.



AND THEN HE REALIZED: "THE TRANSFER OF MINDS!" NAGAN DOES NOT KNOW--IN ESCAPE BECOMES IMPERATIVE.



...BUT UNLIKELY.



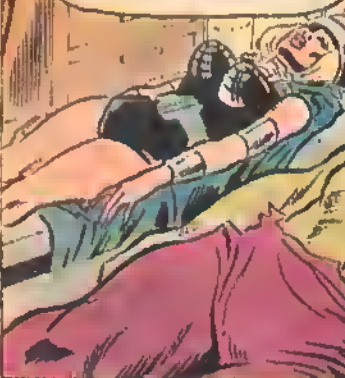
VERY WELL, IF HE CANNOT OPEN THE DOOR, THERE MUST BE SOME OTHER MEANS OF E



AND HE'LL FIND IT-- AND CLAIM HIS REVENGE!

AND IN CONNECTICUT, EVEN AS THE FAWN COMMENCES ITS SEARCH...

BUT WHY WON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT THESE HELMETS ARE FOR? I'M A SCIENTIST, TOO! I'LL UNDERSTAND!



WHEN THE PROCESS IS COMPLETED, THEY'LL SIMPLY SEE THINGS-- MORE OUR WAY.

THEY'RE ENCEPHALO-TRANSMOGRIFIERS, JERRY--

WHAT--?

--DESIGNED TO PERFORM A SUBTLE ALTERATION ON OUR SUBJECTS' THOUGHT-PATTERNS.



UH... AND THEN WHAT? WHAT'LL YOU DO WITH THEM, I MEAN?

THEN WE LET THEM GO, OF COURSE--WITH YOU TO ACCOMPANY THEM!

WHAT POSSIBLE USE COULD THEY BE TO US OTHER-WISER



RIGHT... STUPID OF ME WASN'T IT?

LORD, I CAN'T JUST STAND BY AND LET THIS HAPPEN... BUT I CAN'T MAKE A MOVE TO STOP IT WITHOUT REVEALING WHO I'M NOT! CAN'T PANIC! GOTTA THINK...!

C'MON, NORRIS-- WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

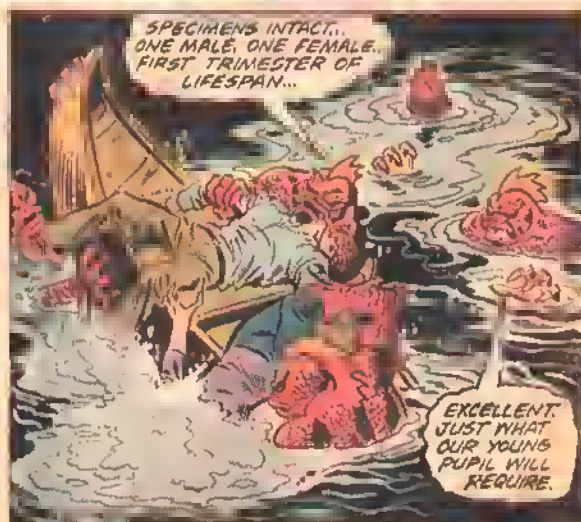
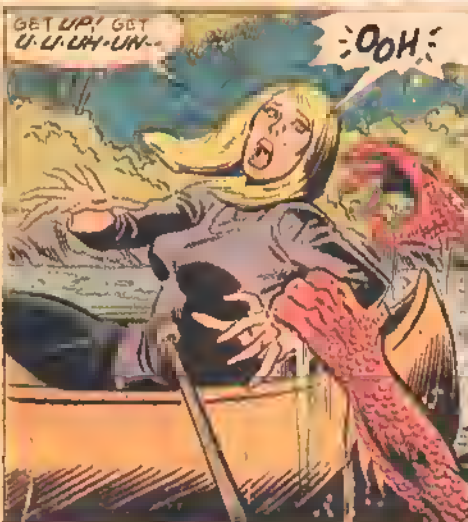
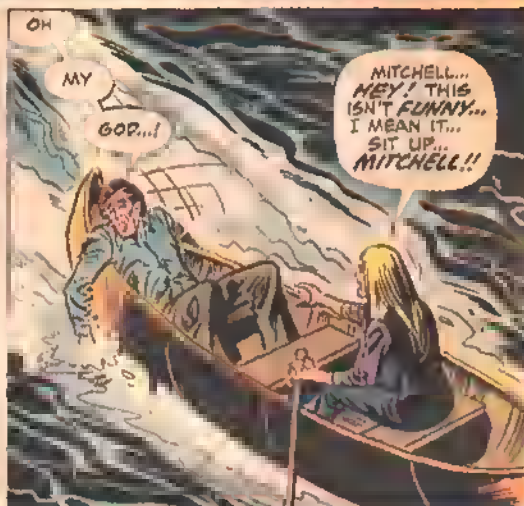
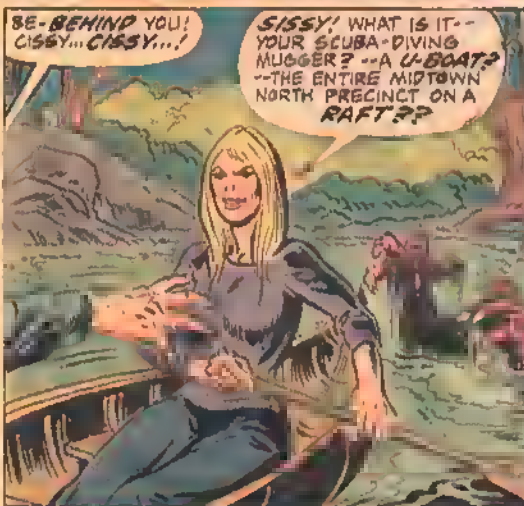
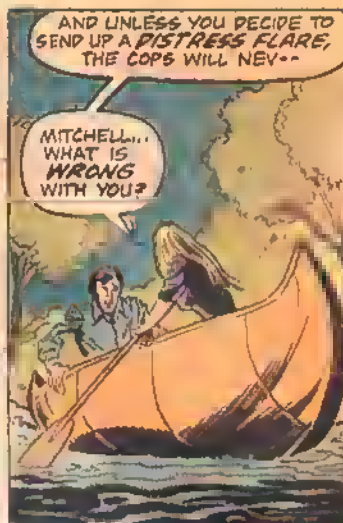


TREPIDATION, IT SEEMS, IS AFOOT EVERYWHERE TONIGHT... EVEN IN IN CENTRAL PARK.

I KNOW WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE, THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT FUN.

C'MON... SHOVE OFF!

BUT, Cissy...



IN MOMENTS, ZISSY, MITCHELL, AND THEIR CANOE HAVE VANISHED INTO THE MURKY WATERS. FOR A TIME, ALL IS CALM.

THEN, WITH A WHINE OF ENGINES, THE SURFACE OF THE LAGOON ERUPTS, AND ATOP THE STEAMING UPSURGE RIDES...

...WELL, LET'S JUST SAY IT'S NOT A U-BOAT, OKAY?

FA-SHOOM!

SINCE THE PROCESS DOES INVOLVE SOME TIME, AS YOU KNOW...

...WHY DON'T WE ADJOURN TO THE CONFERENCE ROOM, WE'VE MUCH TO DISCUSS.

AND THERE'S SOMEONE ARTHUR WANTS YOU TO MEET, NO DOUBT. HOPE YOU LIKE SURPRISES.

CHONDU--ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE RUBY, OUR NEW ADDITION.

Sulp: NICE... TO MEET YOU. YOU'RE-- THAT IS, MOST OF YOU--IS VERY ATTRACTIVE.

THANK YOU. I ALSO FIND YOUR BODY...INTRIGUING.

PLEASE ACCEPT THIS EXPRESSION OF MY WISH THAT WE GROW TO BECOME...

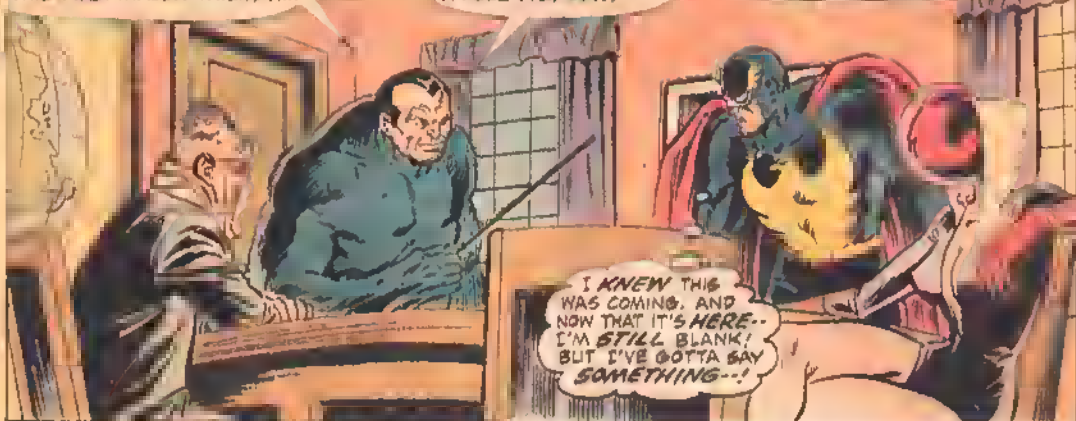
SMAX

CLOSE ASSOCIATES.

ALL RIGHT, YOU TWO--
ENOUGH. I CAN APPRECIATE
THE, EH, **HEADY** SENSATION
YOU'RE EXPERIENCING AT
THIS FIRST MAJOR TRIUMPH...

BUT THOUGH CHONDU'S
WORK THUS FAR HAS BEEN
EXCELLENT--IT REMAINS
INCOMPLETE WITHOUT
A FULL **REPORT.**

TELL US--WHAT HAVE YOU
LEARNED ABOUT OUR CAPTIVES--
HOW BEST MAY WE PUT THEM
TO **USE?**



WELL...DR. STRANGE DOES **MAGIC TRICKS**...HE'D BE FUN AT **PARTIES.**
AND BARB--VAL--THE **GIRL** HAS
A **FLYING HORSE**...IF WE NEEDED
QUICK CASH, WE COULD RENT IT
OUT AT **COUNTY FAIRS**, AND...

YOU'VE NEVER DISPLAYED A
SENSE OF **HUMOR BEFORE,**
MYSTIC--

--AND NOW IS
HARDLY THE
APPROPRIATE
TIME.

OH, **PIPE DOWN!**
I, FOR ONE, AM
DELIGHTED.

NAGAN TOLD ME
YOU WERE EVEN
STUFFIER THAN **ME,**
BUT YOU SEEM TO
APPREHEND THE
ABSURDITY OF--



YOU **BET** I DO, LADY!
WHAT COULD BE **MORE**
ABSURD THAN WE **FOUR**
WORKING TOGETHER--

--WHEN IT SEEMS,
WE EACH HAVE A
DIFFERENT **GOAL!**
LISTEN TO
YOURSELVES!

MAYBE WE
SHOULD GO OVER
THE PLAN **AGAIN**
FROM THE **START.**
JUST TO KNOW
WHERE WE ALL
STAND!

BRAVO!
WE'LL
SAID!

I AGREE, ARTHUR.
YOU'VE BEEN TOO
SECRETIVE LATELY
FOR MY TASTES.

HAVE
I,
NOW...?



ALL RIGHT, THEN--LET'S CONSIDER THE THINGS WE HAVE IN **COMMON**. NOT OUR DIFFERENCES. WE ALL BELIEVE, DO WE NOT, THAT **WE** SHOULD BE RUNNING THIS WORLD BY VIRTUE OF OUR **INTELLECTS**?

WE'RE MEN AND WOMEN OF **VISION**--AND YET THE WORLD HAS **SCORNE**D US ALL... WHICH IS **WHY** I ORGANIZED OUR LITTLE SOCIETY, WORKING IN **UNISON**...

...WE CAN SEIZE THIS MAD PLANET BY THE **THROAT** AND **FORCE** IT TO SUBMIT TO OUR **CONTROL**.

THAT'S MY GOAL--THE ELIMINATION OF THE ACCIDENTAL FACTOR--A SOCIETY WHICH FUNCTIONS LIKE A **PRECISION INSTRUMENT**!

AND NO ONE LISTENED TO YOU, BECAUSE THEY WERE REPULSED BY THE **SIGHT** OF YOU. **PITY**.

BUT MY CASE IS QUITE DIFFERENT. LIKE NAGAN, I SEEK **MORE** THAN MERE APPRECIATION OF MY WORK. AFTER ALL, THIS HEAD WAS MY OWN **CREATION**.

AND IT'S **BETTER** THAN ANY OF YOURS--FEATURE LESS, BEAUTIFUL IN ITS **DESIGN** OF MALLEABLE "ORGANIC CIRCUITRY". IT'S ALL **BRAIN**... AND COMPUTER-QUICK.

AND I WANT **EVERY** HUMAN BEING TO **HAVE** ONE.

SO THAT **PEOPLE** CAN'T REBEL THE WAY YOUR SIMIAN **ORGAN DONORS** DID, EH, ARTHUR? OH, YES... I CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR ANTI-PATHY TOWARD THE **UNFORESEEN**. MY WORK **ALSO** BLEW UP IN MY FACE.

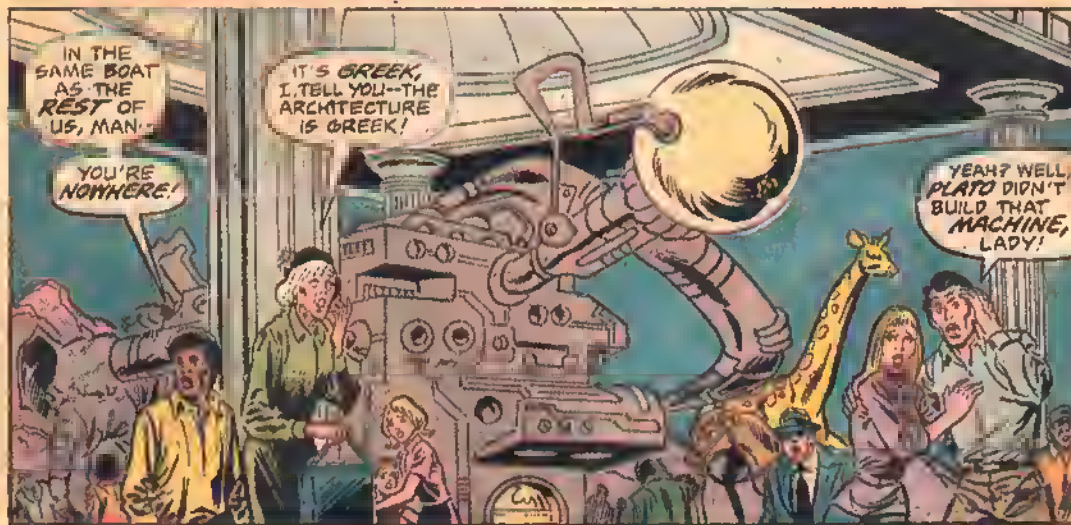
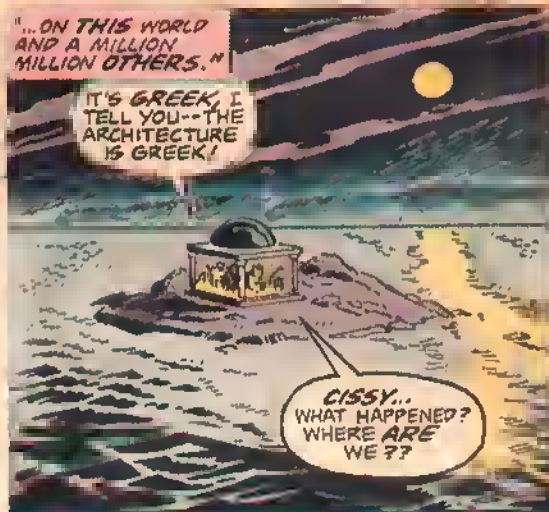
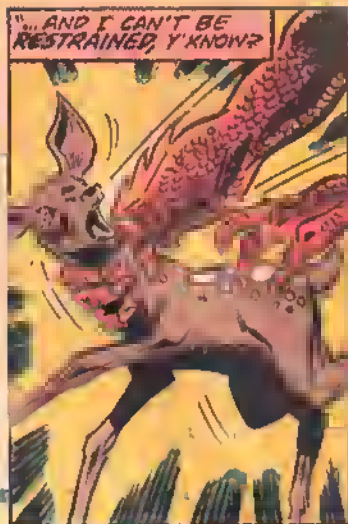
BUT MINE WAS A **CELLULAR COMPRESSION GAS** THAT PRE-DATED HENRY PYM'S BY **TEN YEARS**!

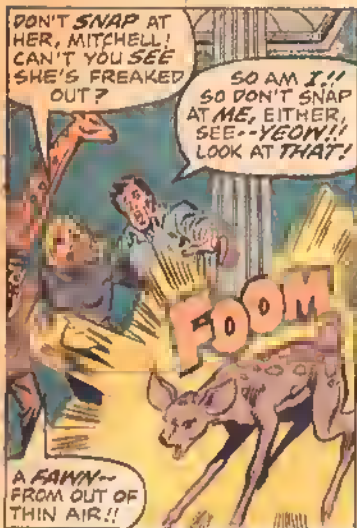
I PROVED THE THEORY. MY FACIAL BONES **SNRANK**. ALAS, THE **SKIN** DID NOT.

AND NOW, CHONDU--IT'S **YOUR** TURN. WHAT DO **YOU** WANT?

THE KEY TO THE **JOHN**, MAYBE? I THINK I'M **GONNA** BE **ILL**.

ACTUALLY, FOLKS, MY **ONE TRUE** DESIRE IS MY OWN--



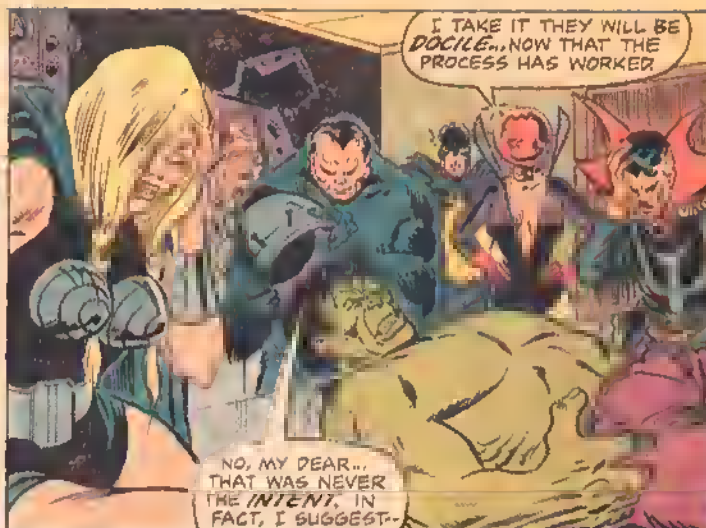


DON'T SNAP AT HER, MITCHELL! CAN'T YOU SEE SHE'S FREAKED OUT?

SO AM I!! SO DON'T SNAP AT ME, EITHER, SEE--YEOW!! LOOK AT THAT!

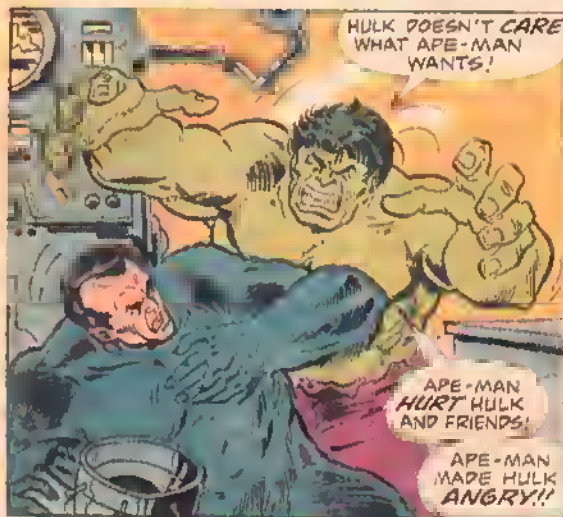
FOOM

A FAWN-- FROM OUT OF THIN AIR!!



I TAKE IT THEY WILL BE DOCCILE...NOW THAT THE PROCESS HAS WORKED

NO, MY DEAR... THAT WAS NEVER THE INTENT. IN FACT, I SUGGEST--



HULK DOESN'T CARE WHAT APE-MAN WANTS!

APE-MAN HURT HULK AND FRIENDS!

APE-MAN MADE HULK ANGRY!!



HULK-- NO!!

HUNK-- WHY DOES MAGICIAN STOP HULK'S HANDS?

WHY??



BECAUSE WE CAME TO THIS PLACE FOR A REASON, EMERALD ONE, AND WE CAME IN PEACE.

WHY WERE WE ATTACKED? WHAT WAS YOUR PURPOSE, MISTER, EH--?

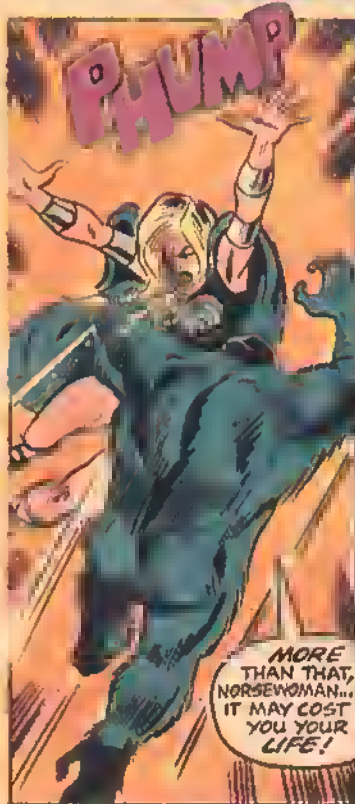
DOCTOR-- ARTHUR NAGAN. AND IT'S NO MATTER, YOU'RE UNHARMED...AND FREE TO GO.

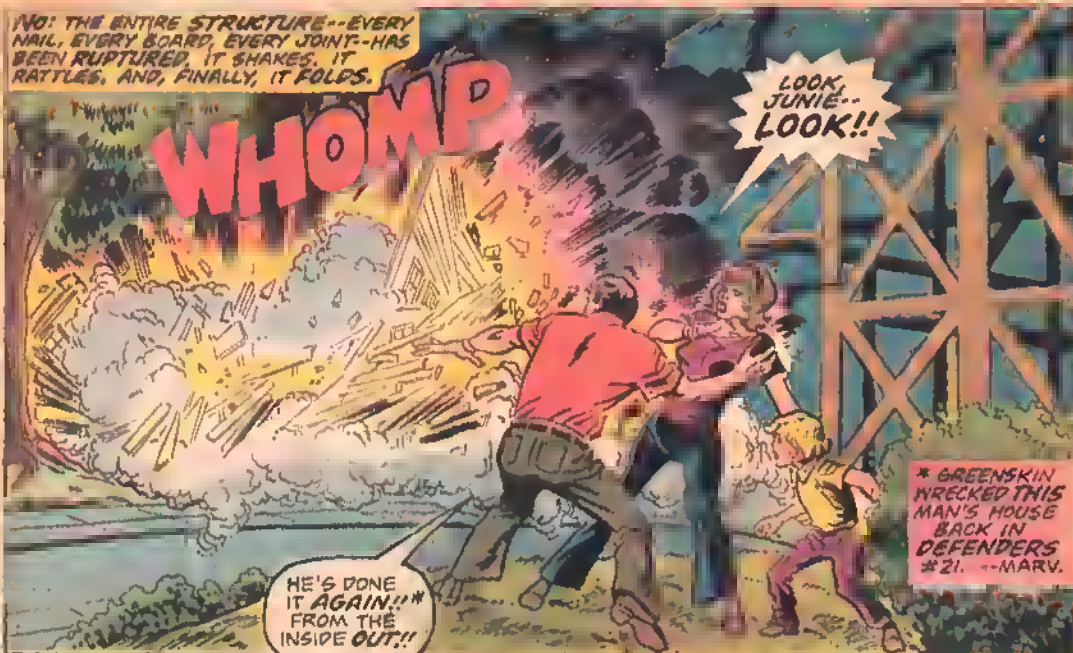
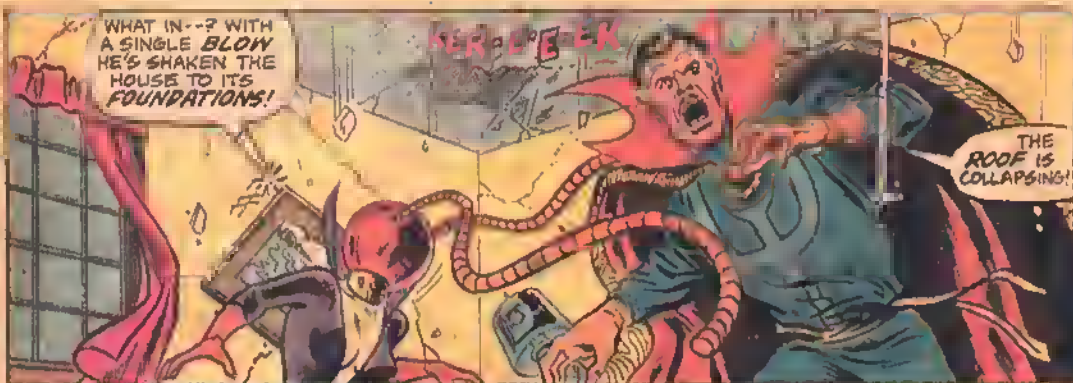


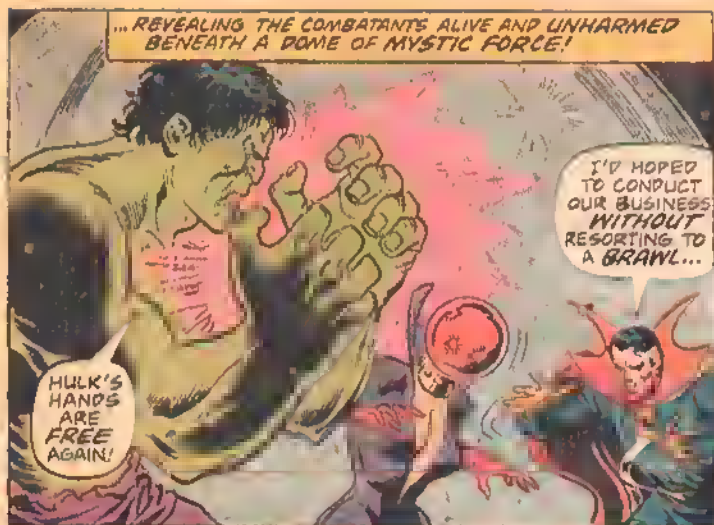
SO IT APPEARS, BUT WE SHAN'T BE ON OUR WAY--

--WITHOUT NIGHTHAWK'S BRAIN!

NO SOONER HAVE THOSE WORDS LEFT THE SORCERER'S LIPS THAN THE TWO STEELY CABLES LEAP FROM RUBY'S SPHEROID HEAD... AND TWINE THEMSELVES ABOUT HIS THROAT!







...REVEALING THE COMBATANTS ALIVE AND UNHARMED BENEATH A DOME OF MYSTIC FORCE!

HULK'S HANDS ARE FREE AGAIN!

I'D HOPED TO CONDUCT OUR BUSINESS WITHOUT RESORTING TO A BRAWL...



BUT IT SEEMS OUR BIZARRE ANTAGONISTS REFUSE TO BE REASONABLE.



EVEN SO, VAL, RESTRAINT IS CALLED FOR...UNTIL WE'VE SECURED KYLE'S BRAIN.

NIGHTHAWK... BEHIND YOU.

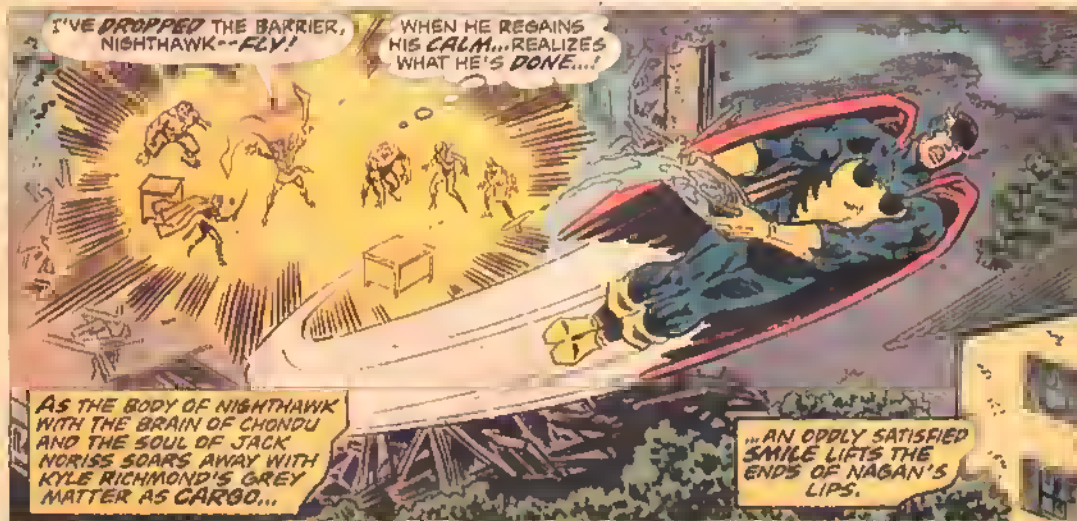
GOOD LORD, IS THAT..?



REPRESS YOUR URGE TO QUESTION...AND ALSO THE REVULSION I SENSE IN YOUR VOICE. WE'VE NO TIME...!

SEIZE IT-- AT ONCE!!

THE MAGICIAN'S LOST HIS HEAD... PANICKED...SENT CHONDU TO TO PERFORM THE RESCUE...!



I'VE DROPPED THE BARRIER, NIGHTHAWK--FLY!

WHEN HE REGAINS HIS CALM...REALIZES WHAT HE'S DONE...!

AS THE BODY OF NIGHTHAWK WITH THE BRAIN OF CHONDU AND THE SOUL OF JACK NORRIS SOARS AWAY WITH KYLE RICHMOND'S GREY MATTER AS CARGO...

...AN ODDLY SATISFIED SMILE LIFTS THE ENDS OF NAGAN'S LIPS.

BUT BEFORE IT'S EVEN REACHED FULL BLOOM...THE THRILL IS GONE.

NOW HULK CAN
SMASH APE-MAN,
DROOPY, AND
BUBBLE-HEAD?

ORDINARILY, MY
FRIEND, I DO NOT
APPROVE OF
REVENGE AS
A MOTIVE...

MAKE AN
EXCEPTION,
STEPHEN...
JUST THIS
ONCE!

AS YOU
WISH, I SHALL
REFRAIN
FROM SPELL-
CASTING...

...TO ALLOW YOU, VAL, AND THE GREEN BEHEMOTH
TO, EH, MOP UP THE FLOOR WITH THEM.

N-NAGAN... STOP
THEM! I'M NOT A
FIGHTER! YOU SAID
WE'D NEVER NEED
TO ENGAGE IN
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE!

WOULD YOU HAVE US
SURRENDER, DR.
MORGAN... WHILE OTHER
OPTIONS REMAIN
AVAILABLE?

SPLOOG

"ONE OF THE FIRST PROBLEMS I CONFRONTED, SIR, UPON
THE INSTALLATION OF MY NEW HEAD... WAS PROTECTING
IT FROM FOOLS WHO WERE SO APPALLED BY ITS ASPECT
THAT THEY FELT DRIVEN TO DESTROY IT--AND ME.

GOO!! CLINGING
TO HULK! HULK
CAN'T MOVE!!

"IT WAS
NECESSARY
THEREFORE
TO CONCEIVE
A SYSTEM OF
DEFENSIVE
TACTICS."

NOTHING VICIOUS...
JUST HIGHLY
UNDIGNIFIED

...TO
REFLECT MY
OPINION OF
MY ASSAIL-
ANTS.

SHALL
WE BE GOING,
GENTLEMEN?

OVER MANHATTAN, MEANWHILE, THE CRAZY-QUILT COMPOSITE OF JACK, CHONDU, AND KYLE MANAGES A RELIEVED SIGH...!



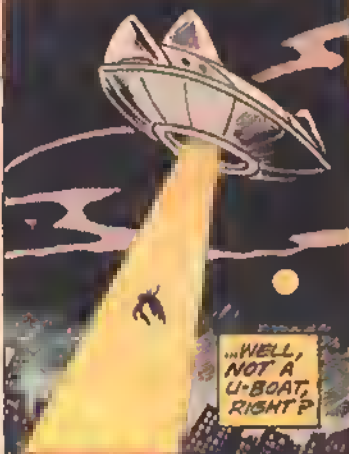
I THINK WE MADE IT OLD BUDDY BRAIN HOME

...FREE.

A BEAM OF LIGHT STABS DOWN FROM THE SMOG-SHROUDED SKY...

...RENDERING "NIGHTHAWK" IMMOBILE...

...HAULING HIM UPWARD INTO THE BELLY OF



...WELL, NOT A U-BOAT, RIGHT P

INSIDE...



JACK'S MIND REELS AS KYLE'S EYES GAPE AT ONE OF THE UNIVERSE'S MOST STUNNING FIGURES.

WELCOME, NIGHTHAWK, FROM MY FRIENDS, THE LUGGERDITES OF ZAAR...



...AND FROM
NEBULON
THE CELESTIAL
MAN!

JACK FEELS KYLE'S STOMACH... FALL AWAY.



NEXT

THE FAWN UNLEASHED--THE LITTLE BALD MAN IN THE METEORITE--THE MENACE OF CELESTIAL MIND CONTROL--THE BOZO SYNDROME--AND MORE, IN THE WEIRD TALE WE CALL...

"A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO GET WASTED!"

DEFENDERS DIALOGUE

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Dear Everyone at 575 Madison Avenue,

A short note to THE DEFENDERS was in order, I decided. So, here it is:

I find myself in complete agreement with Ralph Macchio (see his letter in DEFENDERS #29). I have yet to see a BAD issue of the DEFENDERS. They are, at worst, entertaining and, at best, mind-boggling.

Steve, Sal, Vinnie, John, Glynis and Marv have wrapped up, with #29, one of the finest "springboard" tales I have encountered in ANY medium.

This entire story, of course, has set the stage for the GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY, magazine (when is that long-awaited series due to premiere, anyway?) Yet, as a whole it is filled with the typical Gerber ingredients...humor, social commentary, scathing satire, and even (gasp!) a look at the sex life of the badoon race.

True, the device used to remove the Defenders from the Earth of the future and back to their own time was rushed and slightly contrived; It detracts only slightly from the tale, and is entirely forgivable when you realize that Steve and Sal brought their heroes from the brink of defeat, to a total conquest of Earth, and then brings the Defenders back to their own time within eighteen pages.

Good job, all! But what are you going to do for an encore?

Bruce Canwell
Meadows Rd. RFD #2
Bowdoin, MA 04008

Well, Bruce, we figured we'd just put Nighthawk under the knife, stick his body with an alien brain, then take that brain's consciousness and shove it into a deer's body, replacing it with Jack Norris', and...but if you've read even the second

blurb of this issue's splash page you already know all that.

The Big Question now is, how the heck are we gonna follow up this mess?

Take our word for it. You don't want to know—at least, not in advance. You just want to be here next issue when we introduce a brand new super-star for potential Defenders membership and Valkyrie has the wildest fight of her career against...but, like we said, you really, truly, honestly, no-kidding don't want to know. It's too horrible.

Dear Dr. Strange and Co.,

Will you please hurry up and get back to 1975, because there is an evil running around killing Toms and Linds, and no other super-hero is going to stop him, because he's in YOUR comic, and nobody else can get into it.

The Anonymous Letter-Writer

Somewhere in the World

It figures. The Defenders have been back in their own era for five issues now, and the enigmatic elfin assassin hasn't shown his ghoul-like little face since ish #31.

Will he ever return? What is the strange secret behind his mad mission of murder? Is he related to Snap, Crackle, or Pop? Was he ever employed as a shoemaker? Does he have a license for that gun?

These and other world-shaking questions will be answered here and only here, in the pages of THE DEFENDERS, America's Best-Selling Super-Team Magazine Written by Steve Gerber and Drawn by Sel Buscema. Because, try though they might, they can't get out.

Dear Non-Nebbishes

There's not much you can say about DEFENDERS #30... it was an enjoyable enough little story. It was tastefully campy (I never thought I'd say anything nice about that), but it resembled something planned for one of your Hostess Twinkie ads. Tapping Tommy projected that kind of a feeling about this tale. Let's not see him too soon in the future. He makes a perfect B+tm't villain, though.

Until Howard the Duck joins the hallowed halls of Doc Strange's booby prize room...

Mark Dooley
105 Wehmel Street
Columbus, IN 47201

Listen, Mark, we'll forget that nasty remark about America's Number One Marvel Duck (booby prize, indeed!), if you'll just apologize for your disparagement of our Twinkie ads. It just so happens that both Steve G., our regular DEFENDERS scripter, and Bill Mantlo, who wrote "Gold Diggers of Fear" in ish #30, are rabid fans of those one-page wonders and true believers in the power of creme-filled pound cake to resolve virtually any and all human conflicts.

Okay, okay—truth to tell, Steve likes the cupcakes better, and he's been trying for years to decipher the secret code message he's just positive is contained in the little squiggle of white icing on top. But the fact remains, he would not relish the thought of exiling in a world without Twinkies or Twinkie ads. He's just that kinda guy.)



Dear Steve & Sal,

Bring back the "old" Nighthawk, huh? You, know, the Nighthawk that would throw a left jab and a right hook or do some occasional acrobatics during a fight. Not the "new" Nighthawk who flies through a bunch of bad guys and they all go flying. C'mon Marvel! Captain America wasn't even able to do that until he got his new super-strength from the Viper. Bring back Nighthawk's "slam-banger" fights, like his one with Power Man back in ish #17.

How about the Falcon and Sting ray as future Defenders. I think the fans would like it.

John O'Neill
Stoneham, MA 02180

We're not ruling out Pete or Sting-y as possible candidates for DEFENDERS membership and/or guest-star appearances, John, but as you're aware if you've read the blurb at the end of this issue's tale, the next new character to appear on the scene will be coming from way out of left field. (Honestly, if anyone out there actually expected a resurrection of the Red Guardian, we'd be astonished). Let's wait and see what

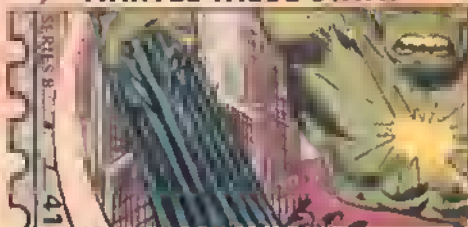
the reaction to this utterly unexpected character revival will be, before we nominate any more costumed cavorters for Defender status.

As regards your suggestion about Nighthawk: frankly, we think you're right. Steve's been letting him rely far too much on the jet-peck and pleading far too little emphasis on his pugilistic and acrobatic abilities. Once we get the poor guy reassembled (Nighthawk, not Steve; although...!), you have our word he'll be doing more with his fists and less with his flight plans.

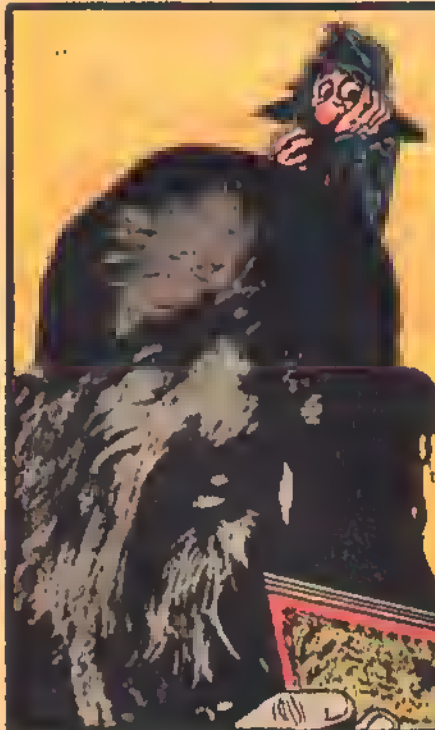
In our defense, though, we should mention that 'twas not Kyla's strength so much as the sheer momentum he could build by dive-bombing an enemy from high-altitude that enabled him to bowl over a host of adversaries at one sweep. Clear?

Good. Then we'll close this month's Dialogue with another reminder not to miss our next landmark issue. All hype aside, you'll be seeing Val in her most savage struggle yet: you'll be meeting a new and controversial superdoer; and, to help us, you'll begin to see where the past several months of insanity have been leading. That's all in DEFENDERS #35, on sale in just thirty days. Be here!

MARVEL VALUE STAMP



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